

Grade 7 Writing

Expository Scoring Guide

April 2019

Grade 7 Writing Expository Prompt

READ the following quotation.

Other people may be there to help us, teach us, guide us along our path, but the lesson to be learned is always ours.

—*Anonymous*

THINK carefully about the following question.

Is it better for people to learn from others, or is it better for people to learn on their own?

WRITE an essay explaining the best way to learn new things.

Be sure to —

- clearly state your controlling idea
- organize and develop your explanation effectively
- choose your words carefully
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentences

Score Point 1

The essay represents a very limited writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is inappropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies that are only marginally suited to the explanatory task, or they are inappropriate or not evident at all. The absence of a functional organizational structure causes the essay to lack clarity and direction.
- ❑ Most ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but the controlling idea is missing, unclear, or illogical. The writer may fail to maintain focus on the topic, may include extraneous information, or may shift abruptly from idea to idea, weakening the coherence of the essay.
- ❑ The writer's progression of ideas is weak. Repetition or wordiness sometimes causes serious disruptions in the essay. At other times the lack of transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections causes the writer to present ideas in a random or illogical way, making one or more parts of the essay unclear or difficult to follow.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is weak. The essay is ineffective because the writer uses details and examples that are inappropriate, vague, or insufficient.
- ❑ The essay is insubstantial because the writer's response to the prompt is vague or confused. In some cases, the essay as a whole is only weakly linked to the prompt. In other cases, the writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a lack of understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be vague or limited. It reflects little or no awareness of the expository purpose and does not establish a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice may impede the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are simplistic, awkward, or uncontrolled, significantly limiting the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer has little or no command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Serious and persistent errors create disruptions in the fluency of the writing and sometimes interfere with meaning.

Theres a whole bunch of things you can do to learn things, but be sure not to choose the bad one. You can go to school and teachers will teach you things\subjects. You can ask your parents, and they will teach you from right\wrong.

Do not ask Strangers! Because what they say, may not be true. For instance, they might say, "Smoking is cool!" when it's really not. You can get Cancer, Heart Attacks, MISC.

So ask who you TRUST, not some stranger.

Score Point 1

Although the writer addresses the topic of learning, a controlling idea is missing from the response. Instead of focusing on the best way to learn, the writer observes that “theres a whole bunch of things you can do to learn things, but be sure not to choose the bad one.” The entirety of this response is centered around the writer giving advice about the best people to learn from and then presenting ideas that are only weakly linked to the topic specified in the prompt (“... teachers will teach you things\subjects”; “... Parents ... will teach you from right\wrong”; “Do not ask Strangers! Because what they say, may not be true”). The call-to-action conclusion further indicates the writer’s little to no understanding of the expository purpose. In addition, vague word choice (“a whole bunch of things,” “bad one”) significantly limits the effectiveness of this very limited writing performance.

You are always learning. Whether you are playing, eating, or resting, you are always learning. Therefore, if there are so many ways to learn, is there truly a best way to learn?

You are always learning, so, is there really a best way? It all depends on the circumstances. If you're playing soccer, then the best way is to watch, then do some drills. If it's acting, though, you just have to figure it out.

You are always learning. There's a different "best way" to learn almost everything, so it's possible that there isn't a best way. Whatever you're learning, it's not as if drills can teach you everything or watching can teach you everything.

You are always learning. Even if there isn't a best way to learn, there are still good ways to learn. Sleeping, suprisingly, is a great way to learn, because this is when the brain "takes to heart" all you've done that day.

You are always learning, whether you are playing, eating, or resting, you are always learning. Whether there is a best way to learn or not, you are always learning.

Score Point 1

Following an unclear controlling idea that the best way to learn "depends on the circumstances," the writer provides contradictory ideas about "best ways" to learn ("There's a different 'best way' to learn almost everything"; "Even if there isn't a best way to learn, there are still good ways to learn"). These ideas are related to the topic specified in the prompt, but a lack of transitions and the repetition of "you are always learning" make the essay difficult to follow. The development of ideas is weak because the writer never explains which of the methods listed is the best way to learn ("... playing soccer ... watch, then do some drills ... acting ... you just have to figure it out," but drills or watching cannot "teach you everything"; "Sleeping, suprisingly, is a great way to learn ..."). In addition, word choice is vague ("a different 'best way' to learn almost everything"), and the conclusion merely repeats ideas instead of contributing to the development, further impeding the quality and clarity of this very limited writing performance.

It is important to know different things in your your life because your never going to know when you have to figer out something and your never going to know what to say listen when your teacher happens to call on you And you are not listening to heror him your not going to know what to say also travling around the world to learn new things try different food and talking to other people that aint the same religion as you are learn different things by your own your not going always people that are going to be able to help you out. There's other people that maybe there to help us, guide us along our path, but the lesson is that if want to learn you can if you dont learn you not going to achive any thing in your life you always can make mistakes but on learning try your best to never make mistakes again.

Score Point 1

Instead of providing a clear controlling idea about the best way to learn, the writer provides several disconnected ideas about why it is important to learn (you never know when you might have to “figer out something”; your teacher might call on you and “your not going to know what to say”; “your not going always people that are going to be able to help you out”; “you not going to achive any thing in your life”). These ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but they are difficult to follow because the essay lacks transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections. The development is weak because the writer does not provide an explanation about the best way to learn. Persistent errors in spelling (“diffrent,” “figer,” “your never,” “travling,” “religion,” “achive,” “agian”) create disruptions in the fluency of the writing. In addition, the essay contains only two periods, demonstrating the writer’s lack of command of sentence boundaries, further weakening the quality and clarity of this very limited writing performance.

I imagine when you know the best way to do new things or when you learn something and you don't get able to forget what you learn.

The best way to learn new things is seeing the news paper and listening to the radio.

The first reason of the best way to learn new things is seeing the news papers every day and when you see the new papers you know what goanna happen that day, and you learn new things. and you don't forget them at all.

The second reason of the best way to learn new things is listening to the radio and listening to the radio it makes you learn a lot of stuff and you hear what's goanna happen. and then you get to know first then the other people.

This are the reason why is the best way to learn new things on life because you don't forget what you learn.

Score Point 1

The controlling idea of this response is that “the best way to learn new things is seeing the news paper and [listening] to the radio.” Although the writer provides an organizing structure for the essay (“The first reason,” “The second reason,” “This are the reason . . .”), the progression of ideas is weakened by repetition (“you don't forget what you learn”; “you learn new things”; “you know what goanna happen”) and the absence of sentence-to-sentence connections. The development is insubstantial because the writer uses details that are too vague and insufficient to be effective (“when you see the new papers you know what goanna happen that day and you learn new things”; “listening to the radio it makes you learn a lot of stuff and you hear what's goanna happen and then you get to know first . . .”). Sentence construction is awkward (“ . . . you don't get able to forget what you learn”; “The second reason of the best way to learn new things is . . .”) and shows little command of sentence boundaries (“ . . . and when you see the new papers you know what goanna happen that day. and you learn new things. and you don't forget then at all”). Combined, these features impede the quality and clarity of this very limited writing performance.

Score Point 2

The essay represents a basic writing performance.

Organization/Progression

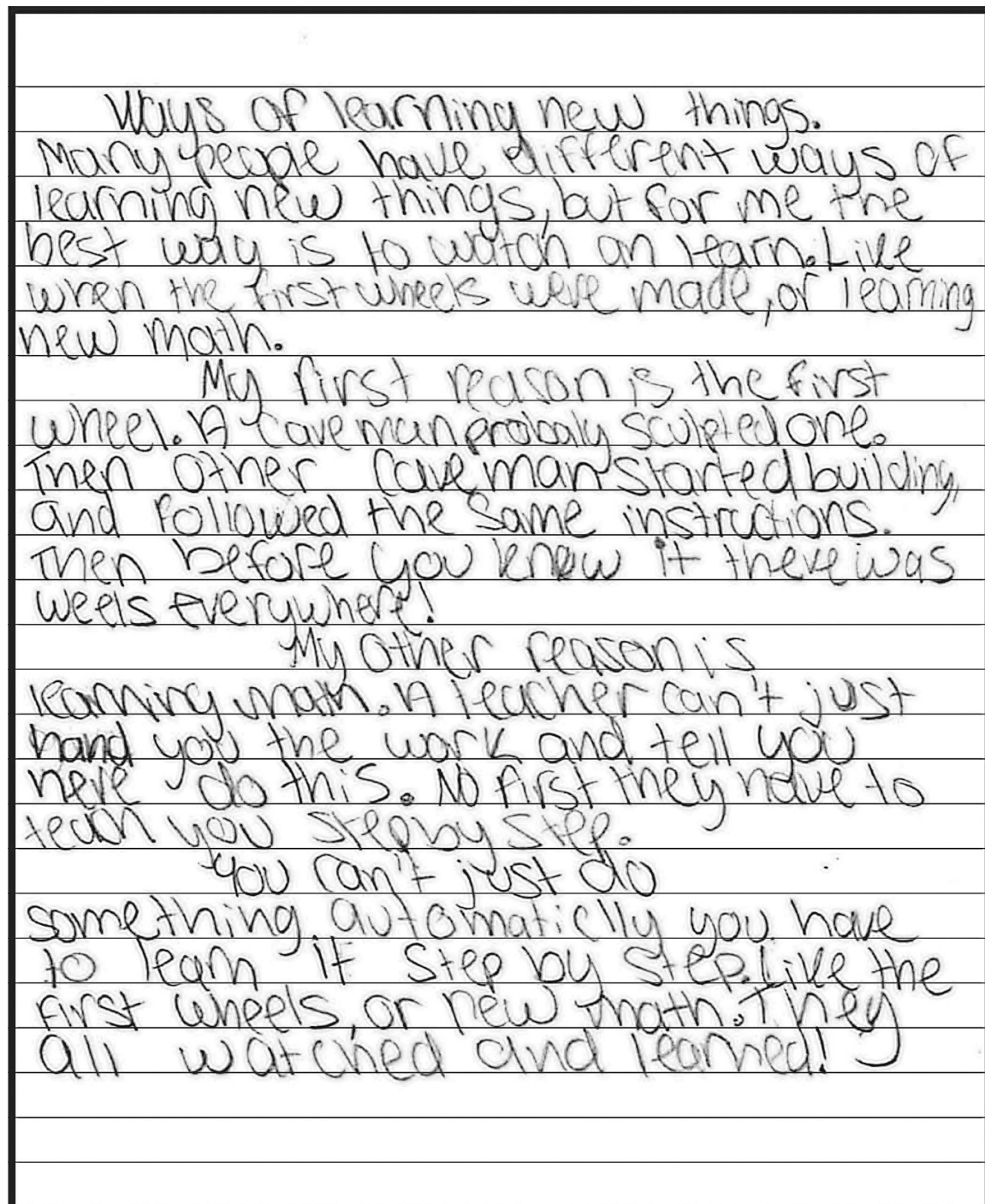
- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is evident but may not always be appropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is not always clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are only somewhat suited to the expository task.
- ❑ Most ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but the writer's controlling idea is weak or somewhat unclear. The lack of an effective controlling idea or the writer's inclusion of irrelevant information interferes with the focus and coherence of the essay.
- ❑ The writer's progression of ideas is not always logical and controlled. Sometimes repetition or wordiness causes minor disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections are too perfunctory or weak to support the flow of the essay or show the relationships among ideas.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is minimal. The essay is superficial because the writer uses details and examples that are not always appropriate or are too briefly or partially presented.
- ❑ The essay reflects little or no thoughtfulness. The writer's response to the prompt is sometimes formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates only a limited understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be general or imprecise. It reflects a basic awareness of the expository purpose but does little to establish a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice may not contribute to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are awkward or only somewhat controlled, weakening the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates a partial command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Some distracting errors may be evident, at times creating minor disruptions in the fluency or meaning of the writing.



Score Point 2

The writer presents the controlling idea that “many people have different ways of learning new things, but for me the best way is to watch an learn.” The writer supports the controlling idea by presenting two examples of groups who were taught new skills by others (cavemen and teachers), but perfunctory transitions (“My first reason,” “My other reason”) and multiple repetitions (“watch an learn”; “step by step”) weaken the progression of ideas in the essay. Development of ideas is minimal because the ideas are only partially presented (“Then other caveman started building, and followed the same instructions. Then before you knew it there was weels everywhere”; “A teacher can’t just hand you the work and tell you here do this. No first they have to teach you step by step”). Although there are instances of weak sentence control that create minor disruptions in the fluency of the writing, overall this response represents a basic writing performance.

"I have a question!" I yelled raising my ^{long} hand. I think the best way to learn new things is from others. We can all learn so many new things from ^{wise} elderly people, adults, teenagers, or even adorable little kids. They all know something that we don't know. If you ask a person a simple question you don't know, and somebody tells you the answer, that means you learned something new from others. In my opinion, I don't think we would be that smart if we learn on our own.

Take this as an example, who taught us our ABC's, our multiplication facts, our own name, and our letters and numbers. I'm pretty sure we didn't teach ourselves. We must learn from somebody who went through this. How do we think our parents learned, or our teachers learned? They also probably learned from others. Even if we go to Google and type in a question we are asking somebody or something is going to answer your question. You always learning new things everyday from others.

In summarization, I believe that the best way to learn new things is by others. If we didn't, then this crowded world would be full of boringness.

Score Point 2

The writer begins this essay with a brief anecdote before stating the controlling idea ("the best way to learn new things is from others"). While most ideas are related to the topic specified in the prompt, the progression of ideas is not always logical and controlled. For example, in the first paragraph the writer shifts focus from the idea that we can learn something from everyone in our lives to an undeveloped description of learning something from someone else ("If you ask a person a simple question you don't know, and somebody tells you the answer, that means you learned something new . . ."). In the second paragraph, the writer explains why we would not "be that smart if we [had to] learn on our own," and then describes ways people have learned from each other. The writer incorporates appropriate rhetorical questions to make the point that we have always learned from someone else (teacher, parent), but beyond the rhetorical questions, the writer does not develop this idea. Imprecise word choice ("In summarization," "If we didn't [learn from others], then this crowded world would be full of boringness") further weakens the effectiveness of this basic writing performance.

It is better for people to learn from others. When you learn from other they can tell you what they did. Also, they can give you tips. They can help your problems. They can tell you what they did. They can show you the way on the right path. Also, they can tell you what to do and what not to do. When you get help they can show you the easy way to do it.

They can give tips. You and your mom are cooking, but you need help. With the help of your grama she can give you cooking tips. Also, your parent can show you how to learn something. Finally, they can show you how to build something like a table, or even a house.

It is always good to help from other, because you could get confused or lost. When people teach you that means they care.

In conclusion, it is better for people to help us, teach us, and guide us along our path. Also, when people help us it gives you more ideas.

Score Point 2

The controlling idea for this essay is that “it is better for people to learn from others.” The writer organizes the essay around three reasons to learn from others (others can tell you “what they did,” they “give you tips,” and they “help your problems”). However, the progression of the essay is not always controlled because the writer repeats ideas within the second and third paragraphs, and sentence-to-sentence transitions (“When you . . .”; “They can . . .”; “Also”) are too weak to show the relationships among ideas. Additionally, the development of ideas is too minimal (“your grama . . . can give you cooking tips”; “your parent can show you . . . how to build something like a table, or even a house”). The writer’s word choice is general (“what they did,” “what to do,” “how to learn something”), and the last two paragraphs include new ideas that cause the essay to lose focus (“When people teach you that means they care”; “Also, when people help us it gives you more ideas”). Overall, this essay represents a basic writing performance.

Learning new things, thats hard especially if you have never done them before. I believe that if learn all by your self you will learn better, because youre teaching your self your own tricks.

When you learn by your self you understand better you will make mistakes but thats how you learn.

You can explore new things, Also you wont have anybody watching over your shoulder watching you, screaming and yelling telling you what to do.

Learning by your self is the best way to learn in my opion. I do it all the time, I think you can control your ideas better, and you can learn from your mistakes.

The kind of percon that should learn by them selfs is one that doesn't like to be bossed around. They can control their ideas better and learn at their own pace.

Score Point 2

In this response the writer provides the controlling idea “if [you] learn all by your self you will learn better, because youre teaching your self your own tricks.” However, the progression of ideas is not always logical and controlled because transitions (“When you learn by your self . . .”; “Learning by your self is the best way . . .”) are repetitious and too perfunctory to show the relationships among ideas and support the flow of the essay. The writer develops the essay in a superficial manner because details about learning on your own (“you will make mistakes but thats how you learn”; “You can explore new things”) and teaching yourself instead of learning from others are too briefly presented to be effective (“I do it all the time”; “you can control your ideas better”; “The kind of person that should learn by them selfs is one that doesn’t like to be bossed around”). In addition, awkward sentence construction (“Learning new things, thats hard . . .”; “I believe that if learn all by your self . . .”) and partial command of sentence boundaries (including comma splices and fused sentences) weaken the overall effectiveness of the essay. For these reasons, the essay demonstrates a basic writing performance.

Score Point 3

The essay represents a satisfactory writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is, for the most part, appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are adequately suited to the expository task.
- ❑ The writer establishes a clear controlling idea. Most ideas are related to the controlling idea and are focused on the topic specified in the prompt. The essay is coherent, though it may not always be unified due to minor lapses in focus.
- ❑ The writer's progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and sentence-to-sentence connections are sufficient to support the flow of the essay and show the relationships among ideas.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is sufficient because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and appropriate, adding some substance to the essay.
- ❑ The essay reflects some thoughtfulness. The writer's response to the prompt is original rather than formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a good understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice is, for the most part, clear and specific. It reflects an awareness of the expository purpose and establishes a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice usually contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are varied and adequately controlled, for the most part contributing to the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates an adequate command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although some errors may be evident, they create few (if any) disruptions in the fluency of the writing, and they do not affect the clarity of the essay.

Other people may be there to help us, teach us, guide us along our path, but the lesson to be learned is always ours. I agree with this anonymous quote because people that have gone through things and decide to help you don't give you a chance to make mistakes and learn your lesson. I learned this when I had trouble in math.

When I was in 5th grade I had a lot of difficulties with math I was even failing. So I would ask my sister to help me. Instead of helping me she would practically do my work. I didn't really care, but I should have, so she would do all my math homework.

When my mom found out she was furious she made my sister stop. A few days after I had a surprise math test. Of course I failed! After that I started attending tutoring and doing my own math homework. My sister actually helps me now and doesn't do my work. I'm still not great at math and it's not my favorite subject, but I'm still passing. So the quote is basically saying it's better to learn your own lessons and make mistakes.

Score Point 3

In the introduction of this essay, the writer references the boxed information from the prompt and then segues into the controlling idea that it is better to learn on your own because “people that have gone through things and decide to help you don’t give you a chance to make mistakes and learn your lesson.” The controlling idea is sufficiently developed with a personal anecdote to illustrate the negative consequences of not doing your own homework (getting in trouble with a parent; failing math). The writer adds substance to the essay by explaining how changes made in work habits (attending tutoring; asking a sister for help instead of letting her do the work; learning from mistakes) led to improved math skills over time. Clear and specific word choice (“practically do my work,” “Of course I failed”) clarifies how learning on one’s own is most effective. Overall, this essay demonstrates a satisfactory writing performance.

Some of the best ways for people to learn new things are to learn them with the help of a partner, do some research, and even experiment with a certain topic.
People learn and understand things better when they have a partner. For example, when I was studying for an upcoming math test, I asked my dad to help me with a topic that I didn't fully understand. After sitting with him and working on a few practice problems, I started to understand it better. The next day we had test and I aced it. By doing this, I learned and understood a topic in a way that I couldn't have learned by myself. There are others out there who learn things in the same way.
Some people even learn things best when they experiment with an idea or topic. For example, in my Math and Science Investigation class, we were learning about simple and compound machines and how they help us today. Some students didn't fully understand it, so our teacher told us to make one. By making one, we all learned the importance of simple and compound machines. We couldn't have learned about them in a better way.
These ways are beneficial in many ways to people, especially to understand or learn a new topic or idea.

Score Point 3

The writer of this response presents the controlling idea that “some of the best ways for people to learn new things are to learn with the help of a partner, do some research, and even experiment with a certain topic.” Using a cause-and-effect structure, the writer organizes the idea that learning barriers can be overcome when one receives instruction that is guided or interactive. Sentence-to-sentence connections (“For example, when I was studying for an upcoming math test, I asked my dad to help me with a topic that I didn’t fully understand. After sitting with him and working on a few practice problems, I started to understand it better”) show how receiving assistance while learning increases one’s level of comprehension and contributes to a progression of ideas that is generally logical and controlled. The writer presents two anecdotes to illustrate how the experiences of working with a parent on a confusing math topic and building simple and compound machines in class led to increased knowledge of math and science concepts. The writer sufficiently develops the anecdotal examples with specific and appropriate details that add substance to the response because they explain how “working on a few practice problems” with a parent resulted in a test being “aced” the next day and how making simple and compound machines helped all students in a class understand the helpfulness of the machines in today’s world. For these reasons, this response represents a satisfactory writing performance.

Learning can come in many ways, shapes, forms and fashions. Sometimes learning new things can mean being taught your multiplication tables, other times it can mean realizing you should tie your shoe before you start running. In my opinion, the best way to learn new things is by learning from your mistakes.

Making mistakes might seem bad at the time you do them, but later they can be learned from. Valuable lessons can come from mistakes and bad choices, and the consequences may seem bad, but in the end they help because the bad consequences remind you not to make that mistake again. There are lots of different types of mistakes to make and they all can teach you many different things. They might teach you things as small as don't do a project the day before it's due or you'll get a low grade. Or a mistake can teach you something as big as, don't hang out with the wrong group of people because they will get you in trouble. Mistakes can also be making the wrong choice, later you will know the right choice to make in that situation.

Wrong choices and mistakes are a great way to learn new things, whether it's your mistake or not. You can be taught many lessons and learn how to make right choices even though the wrong thing was done originally. Mistakes aren't as bad as people think!

Score Point 3

The controlling idea of this response is that “the best way to learn new things is by learning from your mistakes.” Using a philosophical approach, the writer explains that mistakes are valuable learning opportunities. The progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled because sentence-to-sentence connections (“[Mistakes] might teach you things as small as . . . Or a mistake can teach you something as big as . . .”) support the flow of the essay and specify lessons that can be learned from mistakes. The development is sufficient with some thoughtfulness as the writer explains that “Mistakes aren’t as bad as people think” because mistakes help people make the right choices later on. Specific and appropriate examples (learning not to do a project the day before it is due or you will get a low grade; learning not to hang out with the wrong group of people or you will get into trouble) also add substance to the essay because they illustrate that you can learn from different types of mistakes. Varied, adequately controlled sentences (“Learning can come in many ways, shapes, forms, and fashions”; “Wrong choices and mistakes are a great way to learn new things, whether it’s your mistake or not”) further contribute to the effectiveness of this satisfactory writing performance.

Learning is a process or more like a ritual that every single human begin goes through. It's live time it keeps going and going never stopping. Every soul learns differently no one is identical. Isn't that just extraordinary, to know that you are one in a million? One in a million or not we all all learn new things differently. Whether it's making a song, a acronym, or even an activity. They all help, but which one is the best one?

Making a song to help you learn new things is a fantastic way of learning, and most importantly remembering. If the song is catchy and well versed, then you are more likely to exceed your and your teacher's expectations. This method is great for the younger and less mature age group because it catches the attention of the young mind. Acronyms are also a very effective way of learning new things, especially if the new material is on the challenging side of things. I personally love this method because it really does stick to your head. This is especially helpful in the higher grade levels. Lastly, activities are also a very simple yet very effective. Kids are more eager to learn new material rather than just handing them notes. Also activities are extremely fun and I as a student really enjoy them. There is really not just one good way of learning. There are so many possibilities that is best just to experiment with all methods.

Learning and learning new things is an exciting and epic adventure that every child, teenager, and even you adults go through. I for one have barely started the adventure and it's great.

Score Point 3

The writer begins this response with the acknowledgement that “we all . . . learn new things differently,” to present the controlling idea that “there is really not just one good way of learning”; it is best to “just . . . experiment with all methods.” The writer maintains focus throughout the response on three effective ways students learn new information: making a song, using acronyms, and engaging in activities. The essay begins and ends with descriptive statements about learning (learning is a ritual every human goes through; learning new things is an epic adventure). Development is sufficient because the writer includes specific details about the advantages of each method of learning (“If the song is catchy and well versed, then you are more likely to exceed . . . your teacher’s expectations”; “I personally love this method because it really does stick to your head”; “Kids are more eager to learn new material rather than just handing them notes”). This reflects some thoughtfulness as the writer explains the cause-effect nature of each type of learning. Clear, specific word choice (“for the younger and less mature,” “on the challenging side”) reinforces the idea that children have unique learning needs. Overall, this essay represents a satisfactory writing performance.

Score Point 4

The essay represents an accomplished writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is clearly appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is skillfully crafted because the writer uses organizational strategies that are particularly well suited to the expository task.
- ❑ The writer establishes a clear controlling idea. All ideas are strongly related to the controlling idea and are focused on the topic specified in the prompt. By sustaining this focus, the writer is able to create an essay that is unified and coherent.
- ❑ The writer's progression of ideas is logical and well controlled. Meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the flow of the essay by clearly showing the relationships among ideas, making the writer's train of thought easy to follow.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is effective because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and well chosen, adding substance to the essay.
- ❑ The essay is thoughtful and engaging. The writer may choose to use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing or to connect ideas in interesting ways. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice is purposeful and precise. It reflects a keen awareness of the expository purpose and maintains a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice strongly contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are purposeful, varied, and well controlled, enhancing the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates a consistent command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although minor errors may be evident, they do not detract from the fluency of the writing or the clarity of the essay. The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the essay.

There are two general things that we learn. One is learning how to do something, or even how something works. It is figuring out something you can see, feel, taste, smell, hear, or even do. These things are concrete. The other is gaining knowledge about something abstract. Language, history, and mathematical terms and strategies are abstract because you can't really observe them in nature. Therefore, the best way to learn about something concrete, is on your own. However, the best way to really gain knowledge about an abstract idea is from others.

While learning about concrete things from others may be a more efficient way of learning, it usually isn't the most effective. When you figure out something on your own, it has a way of sticking with you and your mind has a way of personalizing it as a memory. For instance, if I observed the life of a butterfly and saw its life cycle, then I would be more likely to remember and know the information than if I was told about it in a classroom.

Things like language, math and history are abstract. The past is something that can only be learned about from records of what happened or from people who experienced it. Language is something made by people. I could make up my own language, but on my own I would never learn someone else's. The same goes for mathematical terms and strategies. These things need to be taught by people.

Throughout our lives, we learn about abstract and concrete things. Sometimes we learn them on our own, and sometimes others teach us. But the best way to learn about an abstract idea is from others. Furthermore, the best way to learn about something concrete is for us to experience it on our own.

Score Point 4

In this response the writer offers the controlling idea that “the best way to learn about something concrete, is on your own. However, the best way to really gain knowledge about an abstract idea is from others.” Using a compare-contrast organizational structure, the writer provides descriptions of concrete and abstract learning activities. Development is effective because the writer follows those descriptions with thoughtful explanations about why it is more effective to learn concrete things by experiencing them on your own (“your mind has a way of personalizing it”) and abstract things like languages, history, and math from others (“The past is something that can only be learned about from records of what happened or from people who experienced it”; “Language is something made by people . . . on my own I would never learn someone else’s”; “mathematical terms and strategies . . . need to be taught by people”). A specific and well-chosen example about an observation of a butterfly’s life cycle supports the idea that learning concrete things on your own is more memorable than being told the information in the classroom. The writer shares a unique view of the world and connects ideas (concrete vs. abstract learning) in interesting ways, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the expository task. Furthermore, the writer maintains an expository tone by using purposeful, precise word choice (“see, feel, taste, smell, hear or even do,” “observe them in nature,” “experience it on our own”) that illustrates the various ways one can learn. Overall, this essay represents an accomplished writing performance.

Learning new things is like a stream of knowledge. Sometimes it's a waterfall and sometimes it's like a thin trickle of water. The best way to learn new things is by experience because a hands-on event is easier to remember and it helps with social skills.

The best way to learn new things is by experience because a hands-on event is easier to remember than text-book activities. In the book "Worst Summer Of My Life", Paige has to go to summer school because she failed sixth grade. At school Paige has to relearn all of her subjects and learn about the importance of nature. Towards the end of the summer, the teachers surprised Paige and her summer class with a field trip to the forest. There, a guide led the class through the forest talked about the plants and animals that inhabited the forest. After spending the day at the forest, the class headed back to school. When Paige got home, she realized that she learned more at the forest than reading about the forest in a text-book. Hands-on activities create memories while text-book activities don't. Hands-on activities would help students do better on tests because they can access the memories.

Learning new things need a trigger that would help the person remember it. The best trigger would be experience because it helps with social skills. For example, in the book "School Yard", a boy named Gregory is put into a group of kids for a school project. Gregory is used to being left out, so he naturally doesn't say anything. He tries to do the work himself, but he soon realizes that he would have to talk to the other kids in his group in order to complete the project. When Gregory finally gathers the courage to talk to them, he realizes that the other kids were nice, and began to make friends. Throughout the project Gregory learns more with his new friends than trying to learn it by himself. Activities that require a group effort helps with social skills.

Experience helps contain the stream of knowledge in a steady flow. The best way to learn new things is by experience because it helps you with social skills and memory.

Score Point 4

The writer begins this essay with an analogy that "learning new things is like a stream of knowledge. Sometimes it's a waterfall and sometimes it's like a thin trickle of water." This analogy sets up the controlling idea that "the best way to learn new things is by experience because a hands-on event is easier to remember and it helps with social skills." Using a compare-contrast structure, the writer organizes the idea that "hands-on" instruction is preferable to traditional methods of teaching. Meaningful transitions ("The best way to learn new things is by experience"; "Learning new things need a trigger that would help"; "Experience helps contain the stream of knowledge") enhance the flow of the essay and connect the ideas related to the impact of tactile learning. To support the controlling idea, the writer presents two literary examples (*Worst Summer of My Life*; *School Yard*) about characters who unexpectedly benefit from experiential learning. The writer skillfully develops the examples by including specific explanation about how the character Paige learned more from a field trip than a summer class ("When Paige got home, she realized that she learned more at the forest than reading about the forest in a text-book"), and how the character Gregory learned more from group work than trying to learn on his own as usual ("Throughout the project Gregory learns more with his new friends than trying to learn it by himself"). Purposeful, varied, and well-controlled sentences ("Hands-on activities create memories while text-book activities don't"; "When Gregory finally gathers the courage to talk to them, he realizes that the other kids were nice, and began to make friends") enhance the effectiveness of this accomplished writing performance.

The adolescent mind is like a sapling; you can either attach a stake to control its growth, or you can let it grow by itself. The differences between the two options are: one will make the plant straight but dependent on the stake. The other option may result in a slightly crooked but independent plant. Just like with a sapling, it's better to let a mind grow on its own rather than making it dependent on outside influences. One place where this occurs is band.

My band director, Mr. **Smith**, always tells us he can't spoonfeed the music to us, and he is right. When we learn from others, it's like spoonfeeding. The brain doesn't have to do much besides storing the information. It doesn't challenge our knowledge, or make us actually understand a concept. On the other hand, learning material by ourselves really challenges the brain to understand and remember information. This is why Mr. **Smith** requires us to learn part of our music on our own through student sectionals. As a result, our band is able to perform difficult arrangements such as Inglesina and Candide Suite.

In addition to eliminating dependence, teaching ourselves also enables us to get rid of the shackles society clamps on our brains, limiting us to only one form of intelligence. For example, in the book *Fish in a Tree*, the main character, Ally, believes she is stupid because she thinks differently. She's actually dyslexic, but none of her teachers know this. As a result, she spends almost her whole life thinking she's "dumb." This just goes to show that being taught by others means you will be subjected to their definition of "smart" and their opinions and ideas. Letting people learn and think for themselves would result in people thinking freely. Ally is like the sapling restricted by the stake; it would be better for her and for us to learn without the burden of a stake.

Score Point 4

The writer begins this response with an analogy that "the adolescent mind is like a sapling," which is used to establish the controlling idea that "it's better to let a mind grow on its own rather than making it dependent on outside influences." Using a compare-contrast organizing structure, the writer contrasts the negative consequences of learning from others with the positive outcomes of learning on one's own. Transitions ("My band director, Mr. Smith, always tells us he can't spoonfeed the music to us"; "In addition to eliminating dependence") enhance the flow of the essay and clearly connect the ideas related to the benefits of learning independently. The writer effectively develops an anecdotal example of when the writer had to attend student sectionals to independently learn challenging sheet music, which enabled the writer and the writer's band to "perform difficult arrangements such as Inglesina and Candide Suite." The writer further develops the controlling idea with the presentation of an example from the book *Fish in a Tree*, which explains how being "subjected" to others' definitions of "smart" and their "opinions and ideas" negatively impacts the self-esteem of the character Ally, a student with dyslexia. The essay reflects thoughtfulness as the writer concludes the essay by referencing the analogy in the introduction and compares the character Ally to a "sapling restricted by the stake," demonstrating the writer's thorough understanding of the expository task. Purposeful, varied, and well-controlled sentences ("On the other hand, learning materials by ourselves really challenges the brain to understand and remember information"; "It would be better for her and for us to learn without the burden of a stake") further enhance the overall effectiveness of this accomplished writing performance.

Brow furrowing on her forehead, a little girl works with her shoelaces, trying to figure out how to tie them. Her face lights up like a lightbulb, giving a clear message that she is proud of the laces she tied. That memory and lesson learned will stay with her because she learned it by herself. The best way to learn is to learn on your own.

Whenever you accomplish something by yourself, you feel proud. Pride is a strong feeling, a feeling that makes events memorable. Anger, pride, joy, and sadness are feelings that strengthen a memorable occasion. Pride comes in large doses when you accomplish something independently, so when you do something alone and you learned something from that, pride strengthens the memory.

In school, when you're working on a hard handout, you want to ask the teacher about a hard problem. But if you work through it, trying to understand it, and you have an epiphany and you work out the problem, you'll remember it. Going through struggles helps you understand a problem. Instead of someone telling you the answer, you actually learn more from the experience and your struggles.

Whether it's learning to tie your shoes or struggling through a math problem, the best way to learn is on your own. Working through a difficult handout and struggling is better than someone just telling you the answer. The feelings of pride and joy strengthen a memory of doing something independently. Learning alone could be the best thing you could do for yourself.

Score Point 4

The writer begins this philosophical response with a description of a little girl's attempt to teach herself to tie her shoelaces and the pride evident on the girl's face when she succeeds. This brief introduction serves as the writer's first example to support the controlling idea "the best way to learn is to learn on your own." The writer proceeds to use a cause-effect organizational structure to explain that learning through your own struggles results in effective learning ("Whenever you accomplish something by yourself, you feel proud"; "... pride strengthens the memory"). Meaningful transitions ("Whenever you accomplish something by yourself..."; "In school..."; "Whether it's learning to tie your shoes or struggling through a math problem...") enhance the flow of ideas throughout the response. Development is effective with a well-chosen example about learning more from the experience of struggling through solving a hard math problem than from asking the teacher for help. The writer includes specific and well-chosen details ("Going through struggles helps you understand a problem"; "... you actually learn more from the experience and your struggles") that demonstrate the benefits of learning independently. Furthermore, purposeful and precise word choice ("lights up like a lightbulb," "Pride comes in large doses," "you have an epiphany," "could be the best thing") emphasizes the positive effects of being an independent learner. Holistically, this essay represents an accomplished writing performance.

